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Employee News

Welcome to VDOF!

- ◆ The VDOF would like to welcome Gary Hall-Matson as a new forest technician in the James River Work Area. Gary has been a part-time firefighter with the VDOF since 2016 and has a variety of wildland firefighting experience throughout the country. He has completed some forestry courses at Dabney S. Lancaster Community College and hopes to complete his degree in the future. He also serves as a Captain for the Amherst Fire Department. Gary's start date will be August 25.
- ◆ Please welcome Cameron Lipscomb to the VDOF as a new forest technician in the Jefferson Work Area. Cameron has a B.S in Natural Resources Conservation and Recreation with a minor in Forestry from Virginia Tech. He also attended and completed the Cardinal Criminal Justice Academy in 2011 and has worked a variety of positions with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of State Parks since 2010. Most recently Cameron served as the Park Manager at Staunton River State Park in Scottsburg, Virginia. He will begin his role with the VDOF on August 25.

Forest Health Liaison Position Open

- ◆ One forest health liaison position is open in the Eastern Region. Any field staff with an interest or a desire to learn more about forest health are welcome to apply. The selected individual will receive additional training and participate in monitoring activities with the VDOF forest health program. Forest health liaisons are a point of contact between the field and the forest health program staff, and assist with forest health outreach as needed. These additional duties will not exceed 5% of the employee's time. This is a temporary assignment with a three year term and requires approval from your SAF. If you are interested in applying, please complete [Form 6.6 Forest Health Liaison Application](#) and send to Lori Chamberlin at lori.chamberlin@dof.virginia.gov no later than September 15.

News You Can Use

Logger Best Management Practice (BMP) Cost-Share Program

- ◆ The Logger BMP Cost-Share Program has again received funding from the Commonwealth's Water Quality Improvement Fund and effective August 1st is accepting applications through your local Water Quality Specialist or Water Quality Engineer. The rates have been increased to help with the increased cost of BMP Implementation. The new rates will be 50% of the cost of implementing BMPs on an eligible stream crossing up to \$4,000 (previously \$2,500) and if the project includes the purchase of a bridge then the maximum increases to \$8,000 (previously \$5,000).
 - Eligible loggers must be up-to-date SHARP Logger trained and not have any outstanding Water Quality actions.
 - Please promote this program with the loggers you visit during harvest inspections.
 - [Policy and Procedure 18-004 Logger BMP Cost-Share Program](#) has been updated to reflect the changes.

Printed Publications Available!

- ◆ Did you know there is a list of publications available in printed format on our new Intranet? Here's a link to the page that appears on the Resource Library menu. Field staff should contact their Regional Office for publications. Regional Offices, State Forests and Nurseries should contact [Jennifer Leach](#) to restock when needed - just send her an email with what publication you need and how many. Headquarters staff should contact [Jennifer Leach](#) to obtain packs of publications.
<https://dof.virginia.gov/employee-access/publications-in-print/>

Last Week

State Forester

- ◆ Deputy State Forester Ed Zimmer, Silvicultural Water Quality Program Director Matt Poirot, and Utilization and Marketing Director Sabina Dunghana attended the Virginia Loggers Association annual meeting in Roanoke, Virginia. Former State Forester Jim Garner was recognized for his many contributions to the harvesting community and the greater forestry community in Virginia. Former Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Todd Haymore was a featured speaker.

Fire and Emergency Response

- ◆ John Miller represented VDOF on the Governor's drought monitoring task force. The task force has existed since 2002 and meets proactively during periods in which drought impacts occur in Virginia, to provide advice on state level responses to the situation. Currently, western regions of the Commonwealth remain in abnormally dry or drier conditions according to the most recent Drought

Monitoring report. The included area covers 47% of the Commonwealth. Significant rainfall this past weekend certainly helped the eastern parts of the state, but agricultural impacts continue across western Virginia. Longer range forecasts are predicting a drier than average September, October and November for the Commonwealth.

- ◆ For the month of July 2021, the VDOF responded to 10 wildfires which burned 207 acres in Virginia.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ Lori Chamberlin (forest health program manager) attended a spotted lanternfly training in Albemarle County hosted by Virginia Cooperative Extension. The event was held for master naturalists and master gardeners who have agreed to place spotted lanternfly traps on their property. Spotted lanternfly was detected in Albemarle County this summer and delimiting surveys are currently being conducted.
- ◆ Lori Chamberlin met Dr. Scott Salom and a Virginia Tech graduate student at Lesesne State Forest to look for potential sites for a project studying a tree-of-heaven bio-herbicide. The bio-herbicide is a verticillium fungus that attacks and kills tree-of-heaven. This work is funded by a Virginia U. S. Forest Service Landscape Scale Restoration grant.
- ◆ Forest health staff, Joe Lehn (urban wood utilization forester), and Blue Ridge work area staff Denny McCarthy (area forester) and David Tompkins (forest technician), attended a Salem Red Sox baseball game on August 6 for forest health and fire prevention outreach. Smokey threw the first pitch, and information about the emerald ash borer was distributed to attendees.
- ◆ Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist) met with Fairfax County Urban Foresters and Shenandoah National Park (SNP) staff to look at beech bark disease within SNP. Beech bark disease is caused by *Neofractura* fungi that infect beech trees after colonization by a non-native scale insect. Only a few trees surveyed in the area had both the fungus and the scale, but many other beech in the park were infested with the scale insect. This field day helped survey within SNP and also trained attendees how to search for beech bark disease in other areas within Virginia.

Agency Lands

- ◆ The 2021 white pine cone collection at Buckingham State Forest concluded with a total of 440 bushels. From samples of cones collected, we estimate a yield of 0.6 pounds of seeds per bushel which will result in approximately 264 pounds of total seeds or about 9.2 million seedlings. Ian Morris (forest technician) and Thomas Shinault (nursery technician) hauled the cones to Southern Seed Company in Gomer, Georgia for processing and cleaning.
- ◆ Roguing of the 3rd cycle orchard at New Kent is continuing with an emphasis on leaving VA Best selections. More than 600 hundred trees have already been cut down with about 200 remaining to be rogued. The next step is to remove the trees from the orchard. This thinning operation is essential to maintain the vigor and cone production of the selected trees.

State Forests

- ◆ Shannon Lewis (forest management specialist) met with Ellen Powell (conservation education coordinator) in preparation for a Virginia State University forestry and wildlife tour to be held at Cumberland State Forest in late September.
- ◆ Shannon Lewis inspected Crop Tree Release (CTR) work previously done as one of the hardwood habitat initiative projects on the Cumberland State Forest. Shannon worked on a map showing stands that need mid story release and burning to favor advanced oak regeneration and stands that need CTR.

- ◆ Shannon Lewis prepared a report for the Cumberland Board of Supervisors to present the county their checks for a percentage of timber sales harvested the past year. County to receive 12.5% of the proceeds from timber harvest receipts in 2020-21 fiscal year.
- ◆ Ed Stoots (state lands coordinator), Tom Zaebst (assistant state forests manager), and Kirby Woolfolk (forest management specialist) met with several Department of Wildlife Resources personnel to discuss Wildlife and Hunting management opportunities on Charlotte State Forest once the property is fully acquired. Current and past landowners of the property also took part in the meeting & discussion so we can have a sense of the public's expectations going forward after we have full ownership. Could be an opportunity to have a joint funded position to manage the wildlife especially the wetlands on the property, but more discussion is needed.
- ◆ Ailanthus control work started on the Cumberland State Forest August 9 using Eastern Forest Consultants. Goal is to treat the roads and fields on the State Forest.

State-Owned Lands

- ◆ Timber harvesting started on the Virginia Tech - McCormick Farm Timber Sale last Wednesday. Sheets logging is the contractor. Additional payment of \$17,339.12 was received for the start of harvesting.
- ◆ Additional invasive species control work completed on both Catawba Hospital and McCormick Farm projects.
- ◆ Contractor finished the road construction work for the timber sale project on the Goochland Women's Center Project. Pictured, the completed road built to VDOF specifications with a 60" culvert by 40' long installed in the creek. Thank you to Rodney Newlin (water quality engineer) for designing the specifications. Ontario Hardwood employed the contractor for the work performed.



Central Region

- ◆ Cain Harbison (area forester), Darwin Rhodes (forest technician), Zach Arnold (area forester) and Smokey Bear went out to the national night out event in Luray on August 3rd. At the event, they provided tours of the Type 6 engine, displayed the various tools used to fight forest fires, and discussed the broader services that foresters and the VDOF provide.
- ◆ Bobby Robertson (forest technician) and Alex Hernandez (area forester) participated in National Night Out in the town of Lawrenceville, which was attended by approximately 150 people. They discussed forestry, fire safety and wildfires to the people that attended. National Night Out culminates on the first Tuesday in August, and is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie. It provides a great opportunity to bring government agencies and neighbors together under positive circumstances and serves as a good mechanism for the VDOF to promote forestry and wildfire safety to the general public.

Western Region

- ◆ Collin Sapp (forest technician) and Greg Estoll (senior area forester) used the VDOF bulldozer to assist the Russell County Public Services Authority (PSA) push fill dirt and rock to make a level maintenance yard at their local government facility. (pictured)
- ◆ Emily Wotton and Collin Sapp (forest technicians) assisted the Clinch Valley Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) in Russell County with teaching the annual Kids in the Creek program. The two day program reached 75 elementary-



aged children with students learning about tree leaves, ID and tree rings and age. The theme of this year's event was Healthy Forest = Healthy Communities.

- ◆ Johnny Vest (natural resource specialist), Andrew Vinson (water quality specialist), Ben Wassum (forest technician) and Dan Hosack (area forester) staffed a booth at Blacksburg's annual Steppin' Out town festival. On Friday over 400 people stopped by the tent to interact with VDOF, and on Saturday over 800 people visited the booth. VDOF personnel answered questions on forest management, forest health, water quality, careers in forestry, wildfire prevention, and other services provided by VDOF. VDOF brochures and Smokey Bear material were distributed, and a Covid-safe wildfire prevention Plinko game was played for prizes. Contact information was exchanged with dozens of forest landowners from across the region. (pictured)



Public Information

- ◆ Public Information distributed a [news release](#) August 9 about VDOF's support of Western states to battle wildfires (see media clips below).
- ◆ Recent VDOF Forest News stories:
 - [S.O.S. – Save Our Shorelines!](#)
 - [Forest Health – Scout It Out!](#)
 - [Urban Forestry Comes Full Circle](#)

News Clips

- ◆ [Virginia Dept. of Forestry staff fighting western flames](#)
- ◆ [Virginia sends crews to help fight wildfires in West](#)
- ◆ [Virginia forestry crews heading west to help battle wildfires](#)
- ◆ [Five “Feel Good” Environmental Stories from the Paper and Packaging Industry](#)
- ◆ [Researchers investigate the productivity of kelp forests, sans the iconic kelp](#)
- ◆ [Changing the Face of Forestry](#)
- ◆ [100 YEARS OF PROTECTING FOOD, FIBER, AND FORESTS THROUGH AERIAL APPLICATION](#)
- ◆ [Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts provide climate change benefits](#)
- ◆ [Satellites reveal how forests increase cloud and cool climate](#)
- ◆ [Timber harvesters, truckers get their own COVID relief program](#)
- ◆ [Drought conditions persist, and a look at some of the worst droughts in our past](#)